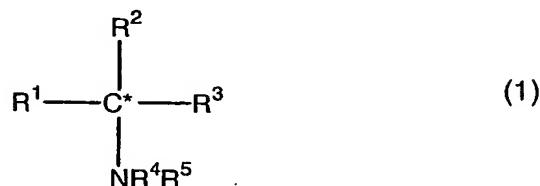


CLAIMS

1. Process for the preparation of an enantiomerically enriched compound of formula 1

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or a salt thereof, wherein:

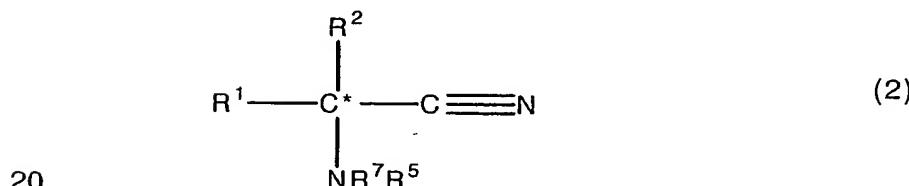
C^* represents an asymmetric carbon atom;

10 R^1 and R^2 are different from each other, and, each independently, represent H, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl or aryl group;

R^3 represents CH_2OH or an optionally protected CHO group;

R^5 represents H, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl or aryl group; and R^4

15 represents H or $\text{C}(=\text{O})\text{R}^6$ wherein R^6 represents H, a substituted or unsubstituted alkyl, aryl or alkoxy group R^4 represents or an amine protecting group, or R^4 and R^5 form together with the N to which they are attached a cyclic imide group, wherein an enantiomerically enriched compound with formula 2



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or a salt thereof, wherein C^* , R^1 , R^2 , R^3 and R^5 are as defined above and R^7 represents H or $\text{C}(=\text{O})\text{R}^6$ wherein R^6 is as defined above, R^7 represents an amine protecting group, or R^5 and R^7 form together with the N to which they are attached a cyclic imine group, is subjected to hydrogenation in the presence of hydrogen, a hydrogenation catalyst and a mineral acid.

25 2. Process according to claim 1, wherein R^3 is an optionally protected CHO group and wherein hydrogen is present at a hydrogen-pressure between 0.1 and 2 MPa.

3. Process according to claim 2, wherein the hydrogen-pressure is between 0.5 and 1 MPa.
4. Process according to anyone of claims 1-3 wherein the amino aldehyde is isolated in the form of a chemically and configurationally stable derivative.
5. 5. Process according to claim 1, wherein R³ is a CH₂OH group and wherein at least during part of the hydrogenation hydrogen is present at a hydrogen-pressure between 2 and 10 MPa.
6. Process according to claim 5, wherein at least during part of the hydrogenation the hydrogen-pressure is between 4 and 6 MPa.
- 10 7. Process according to claim 5 or 6, wherein the hydrogen-pressure initially is between 0,5 and 2 MPa and subsequently, after most of the nitrile starting material is converted, the hydrogen pressure is increased to a value between 2 and 10 MPa.
8. Process according to anyone of claims 1-7 wherein a Pd-catalyst is used as the hydrogenation catalyst.
- 15 9. Process according to anyone of claims 1-8, wherein as starting material, an enantiomerically enriched nitrile according to formula 2 is used that is prepared by (precursor) fermentation, enzymatic resolution, crystallization induced asymmetric transformation, classical resolution, resolution via preferential crystallization, diastereomeric synthesis, catalytic asymmetric synthesis or dehydratation of amino acid amides.
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